

April 2, 2021

FOR YOUR INFORMATION

To: Mayor and Members of City Council

From: Paula Boggs Muething, City Manager



Subject: Western Hills Viaduct – Funding Update

The purpose of this memorandum is to provide an update on the funding status of the Western Hills Viaduct replacement project. The Department of Transportation & Engineering (DOTE) recently submitted two grant applications totaling \$280 million. To date, DOTE has secured over \$125 million in funding for the project, including \$66 million in local matching funds and nearly \$60 million in federal grants for design, property acquisition, and some construction activities. The attached chart highlights the project's funding milestones. An additional amount of approximately \$210 million is still needed to fully fund the project.

BACKGROUND ON THE GRANT PROGRAMS

On March 19, 2021, DOTE submitted a grant for \$140 million to the U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT) seeking funds from its Infrastructure for Rebuilding America (INFRA) program. In addition, DOTE submitted a \$140 million request on March 25, 2021 to the Ohio Department of Transportation seeking funds through its Transportation Review and Advisory Council (TRAC).

The viaduct is eligible to receive funds from both programs due to its size, condition rating, and classification. Specifically, the INFRA program provides federal financial assistance to highway and freight projects of national and regional significance. It is anticipated that \$889 million to \$1.039 billion will be available for INFRA awards this year. The program has been in place since 2016 and is highly competitive, as requests far exceed the amount of funds available. DOTE has previously pursued INFRA funding for the viaduct with increasingly positive results in the two most recent grant solicitation rounds. The viaduct project was one of a select group of projects recommended for consideration to senior-level decision makers in 2019 and 2020.

On the state side, TRAC provides financial assistance to projects in Ohio which increase the capacity of transportation facilities and are over \$12 million. TRAC has already committed \$15 million to the viaduct replacement project to fund design and right-of-way acquisition for the project.

OUTLOOK

Given the encouraging reaction from the USDOT on previously submitted INFRA grant applications and TRAC's continual support for the project, both programs are very promising sources to help close the current funding gap. In addition to INFRA and TRAC, monies from the recently enacted Hamilton County Transit Sales Tax will soon be available and are intended to be used to close any remaining funding gap for the replacement project as the viaduct also serves several of Metro's major bus routes. As a result of these funding sources and pending grant applications, the Administration does not recommend pursuing the use of federal stimulus dollars for this project at this time.

Attachment

cc: John S. Brazina, Director, Transportation and Engineering John B.